



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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MAN ARRESTED FOR THREATENING TO BOMB FEDERAL BUILDING *ICE officers recover guns, ammunition, and military manuals on explosives and bomb making*

SEATTLE – A man who claims to be a former member of the military special forces is in custody this morning suspected of threatening to blow up the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) office in the Seattle federal building. Charles M. Whitaker, 53, was arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers with the Federal Protective Service (FPS) at a home in the Beacon Hill neighborhood early today.

Whitaker, who was arrested on probable cause, is expected to initially face state charges of making threats to bomb or injure property. FPS is also conferring with the United States Attorney's Office to see whether federal charges may be sought.

"We believe this man was potentially planning to take violent action against the local VA office," said Ian Canaan, FPS Commander for Western Washington. "FPS' mission is to ensure the safety of our nation's federal buildings and those who use them. Whether this man would have carried out his threats is uncertain, but we can not afford to take chances."

The investigation began earlier this month when FPS officers received information from a former roommate of Whitaker's alleging he had made repeated threats to blow up the VA office at 915 2nd Avenue in retaliation for being denied benefits. According to an affidavit in the case, Whitaker asserted that he had extensive bomb making expertise from his stint in the military. FPS officers contacted a second former roommate of Whitaker's who corroborated the allegations.

Both roommates also advised that the suspect claimed to have a large stockpile of weapons, including rifles, handguns, and ammunition. FPS officers executed search warrants at the Beacon Hill residence where Whitaker most recently rented a room and at a storage unit he leased in Renton. At the residence, FPS officers found military field manuals on explosives, bomb making, and booby traps. During the search of the storage unit, officers recovered two semi-automatic pistols, ammunition, and a hand grenade. The search was suspended briefly until the King County Sheriff's bomb squad determined the grenade was no longer live.

Whitaker is being held at the King County Jail pending his arraignment in King County Superior Court. The investigation is ongoing.

ICE

